The Desert Whispers from Johnson Valley

VOL. 1, NO. 11 THE MOJAVE DESERT, CALIFORNIA JULY 27, 1968

FACTS FROM FONE FOLKS

Want the real dope on the telephone situation? Attend the meeting of the Johnson Valley Improvement Association on Sept. 7 at 8 p.m., in the community building on Larrea Road.

A representative of General Telephone Co. will be on hand to state the facts, according to a letter from Division Manager Ralph Dutro.

The speaker has been invited so that all in Johnson Valley can be informed, JVIA President Alex Chernoff emphasized in urging everyone to attend.

The next regular meeting of the assocation is scheduled for 8 p.m. Aug. 3.

The association, formerly the Grandview Improvement Association, has launched a fund-raising to raise money for the new kitchen wing. Members are participating in hosiery sales at a reduced club rate, with a percentage to be returned to the JVIA.

The plan was enthusiastically approved at the July meeting. All members are invited to participate in the project, which involves distribution of order blanks only, with the customer mailing it in at her convenience.

Although July attendance was small due to warm weather, the sum of $106 was raised in contribution, sale of rummage and dues. New rest rooms are completed, and it is hoped that kitchen construction can get underway soon.

DIME A DIP SCHEDULED

Everyone is invited to the Dime-A-Dip scheduled by the Desert Ears CB Club, on Aug. 24, at the association hall in Landers. Serving will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Guests may bring their own service, but plates and silverware will be available. Guests are invited to bring a covered dish.

Forty persons attended the July 14 pot luck and meeting. Willa Mae Buzzard won the toaster. Other prize winners were Thelma Booth, Burl Moore and Mal Olin.

The club voted to assist at the Landers' Festival in October, but will not operate a booth this year.

KEEPING UP WITH THE TIMES

With this issue the Desert Whispers from Johnson Valley goes up to $2 a year.

Postage is a large part of the expense and was not anticipated when the paper was launched almost a year ago. We hoped for 50 readers. We now have more than 250 subscribers. Many thanks to our loyal supporters. -The staff

VALLEY HAS NEW GLIDER PORT

Soggy Dry Lake Glider Port in Johnson Valley is open for business on weekends.

Tow service is available on Saturdays and Sundays. Visit-ins of all types of aircraft are also welcome, according to Bill Kensinger, who operates the field.

Kensinger is a crop-duster by profession, and has been flying for more than 30 years. He provides the tow service with a Waco UPF7, which is owned by Dave Casey, also a veteran flyer, with more than 20 years.

Flyers are invited to truck their sailplanes to the dry lake, and any cross-country glider is assured of a tow-out on a weekend, Kensinger said. He has leased the land for 20 years, and FAA approval is pending.

Desert thermals provide a good lift at the location, he pointed out. He plans to expand facilities as business warrants. Plans include a hangar, gas pumps, grassy tree shaded areas, cold drinks, and possibly limited food service when the field is eventually put on a full-time basis.

Kensinger's own sailplane is a Schweizer TG3.

The field is located in the northwestern part of Johnson Valley, half-way between Lucerne and Yucca Valleys. It is about 25 miles west of Giant Rock Airport.

Access by car is from Old Woman Springs Road, the highway between Lucerne and Yucca. A directional sign has been placed at the turn-off onto the dirt road,(the Bessemer Iron Mine Road) on the highway west of Old Woman Springs.

Johnson Valley now has two airstrips, and the Soggy Dry Lake field.

IN THIS ISSUE

Water - Part Three
Know Your Neighbor: Clarence Estes, Railroad Man
Why Phones Are Urgently Needed in the Valley
Neighborhood Notes
Coming Events

OH, MERCY ME

During July, August and September, the gigantic cumulonimbus clouds bring the Southern California storms.

Cumulonimbus may tower to 60,000 feet, and sometimes are flattened into anvil shapes by the wind at the top.

More than 1,800 thunderstorms are raging in the world at any one time. And sometimes four of these can be seen at one time from the Valley.

WATER
(Part Three)

Albert A. Webb Associates, civil engineers of Riverside, prepared the plans for the proposed water system for Johnson Valley. At the request of the Mojave Water Agency, Koebig and Koebig conducted a survey of water needs, which includes a geologic and hydrologic report from John F. Mann, Jr. Based on the information, Webb Associates prepared the detailed proposal.

The proposed Water District covers 22½ square miles, almost 15,000 acres, with ownership almost equally divided between the federal government and private individuals. Elevation is from 2,840 feet to 4,200 feet, with most of the homes below the 3,600-foot elevation.

The report was completed in July of 1967. At that time there were 13 wells, 12 of which are active, in the Valley.

Under the plan, Improvement District I includes an area with an assessed valuation of $420,000, covering 4,160 acres, excluding government land and large undeveloped parcels.

The plans are laid out with the intention of making water available to each of the existing dwellings in the district, and with the anticipation that about half would make immediate use of the service on completion of the facilities.

The engineers predict that Feather River water may not be needed until the year 2000, but that construction of a water system will require going outside of the district for water.

Two locations are suggested for drilling wells. One in Section 24 T4N R3E, which lies two miles northerly of the northwest corner of the proposed district, and the other in Section 32 T4N R4E, adjacent to the northerly boundary. The plans assume using the second location.

Three pressure zones are mapped. In the well field are two 12-inch wells, 400 feet deep, each equipped with a 15 HP pumping unit. Two wells are required according to Health Department regulations, since it is anticipated that more than 100 service connections would be made on completion.

The pumps are capable of producing 90 gallons per minute, and will lift the water from underground to Tank No. 1, located at 2,990-foot elevation in the northeast corner of Section 8. It has a capacity of 10,000 gallons.

Its booster pumps to Tank No. 2, in Section 22, at an elevation of 3,410. Tank 2 has a capacity of 100,000 gallons. Construction of a second 100,000 gallon tank is proposed at the same location, but could be deferred.

Booster 2, adjacent to Tank 2, pumps to Tank No. 3, also 100,000 gallons. It is at elevation 3,610, and is located on government land on the section line between Sections 23 and 24. It serves the highest pressure zone.

The design for each pressure zone calls for a minimum of 40 pounds per square inch and a maximum of 125 pounds under static conditions.

The system assumes that the majority of users will be weekenders for some time, but estimates needs of 120 gallons per capita per day for each full-time resident.

(More in the August Desert Whispers)

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FISH FRY EVERY FRIDAY AT THE MOOSE LODGE IN LANDERS. THE PUBLIC IS INVITED. Choice of fish, shrimp or chicken.
5:30 to 8 p.m.

THE OLD HORNED TOAD GETS HIGH ON A GROOVY TRIP

The timid old horned toad never expected to be a passenger in a sailplane soaring high over the Mojave Desert, with lightning stabbing the ground to the north and the west. Never in a million years! But needled by potential regrets at a missed opportunity, and strapped into a parachute which felt heavy enough to hold up the plane, we climbed in. It was July 5 at the new Soggy Dry Lake Glider Port.

Art Russu piloted the glider, a Schweizer TG3, owned by Bill Kensinger, who operates the glider port. Kensinger towed the plane for take-off in a Waco, owned by Dave Casey, platemaker at Kaiser Steel. All three are veteran pilots, and cheerfully explained as much about soaring as a groundling could absorb.

Son Coot made the first flight, and Ike Lamprecht, the third, with the Old Horned Toad lucky to have the longest and highest ride. With the canopy open, and rushing wind the only sound, we soared over rugged mountains and flat desert, with a view of the petroglyph canyon to the north, Big Bear to the south, and the big green patch of Russu's Circle Locust Ranch to the east. My intention to watch the air speed indicator and altimeter was forgotten in gawking at the familar territory of homes and greasewood from an unfamiliar viewpoint. Only the Jolly Green Giant was missing.

At one time Russu held the altitude record for soaring to 17,000 feet, but others have surpassed that with the tremendous increase in interest in the sport.

Russu is building his own sailplane now. And he may as well be warned that there will be an old horned toad with thumb upraised as he soars by out at the glider port. The OHT is hooked! -M. C.

* * * * * *

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Off Old Woman Springs Road at the Dixie Mine Road in Landers.

Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 11 a.m.
Evening Worship 6:30 p.m.
Hour of Power Wednesdays at 7 p.m.

* * * * *

ST. PAUL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
Mesa Road, Lucerne Valley

Sunday Masses at 8 and 11 a.m.
Rev. Patrick J. Scanlan, Pastor

* * * * *

CALENDAR FOR AUGUST

DESERT EARS CB CLUB
Pot Luck Aug. 11
Noon Landers

*

DESERT EARS CB
Dime-A-Dip
Aug. 24 at 6:30 p.m.
Public Invited
Landers Assn. building

*

Johnson Valley Improvement Assn.
Aug. 3 at 8 p.m.
Regular meeting.
Executive Bd. 2 p.m.
Association Hall
Larrea Road

*

Search and Rescue
Aug. 10 at 6 p.m.
Chisel Inn

* * * * * *

SOUTH JOHNSON VALLEY
by Mildred Jacobs

Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Drorbaugh celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary while visiting their children and their families in Torrance.

*

Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Hawver will soon be permanent residents of the Valley. The Hawvers were out last week making preparations.

*

Louis Armalino is busy building an addition on his sister-in-law's home. Katherine's sister plans to move to the desert in the near future.

*

The Drorbaughs just back from a visit to Myrna's sister and husband in Jackson, Wyoming. They toured Yellowstone and Glacier Parks while on the trip.

*

Dan and Eva Hibbard spent several weeks in Oklahoma with their daughter and her family.

*

Bea Roush back from a few days with her sister in Long Beach.

*

Mike Tenberge informs us he is working on ten stucco jobs in the Valley. Who says J. V. is not booming?

*

Mr. and Mrs. Otto Hansen, of Leisure World in Laguna Beach, enjoyed a few days on the desert.

*

Elmer and Mildred Jacobs enjoyed the barbeque and wine sampling at the Brookside Winery in Torrance.

*

Norm Grant is basking in luxury. He installed a water tank and now has running water.

SEARCH AND RESCUE SEEKS ANSWERS

Lack of satisfactory communication is a serious problem in Johnson Valley it was agreed at the July meeting of the local Search and Rescue group, held at the Chisel Inn.

Comm. Earl Roush presided and introduced the speaker, Sgt. R. R. Rhoads, resident deputy sheriff of Yucca Valley.

Sgt. Rhoads outlined the requirements for a volunteer unit to become affiliated with the sheriff's department, and to be sanctioned by S. B. County.

Members must be between 21 and 60 years of age; must become reserve deputies, and as of next July, have passed the standard first aid course. They become subject to the supervision of the sheriff; can be called out to assist in other areas, and are required to partic ipate in an annual practice.

Since many members of the local rescue group are retired and over the age limit, and some are weekenders, it seems doubtful that an affiliation is feasible.

The need for additional patrol in Johnson Valley was recognized, with the greatest problem cited lack of satisfactory communications. There are no telephones in Johnson Valley, and a call to the sheriff is relayed over citizen band radio or by a 12-mile drive to the nearest phone.

Delays and interference hamper transmissions. Sgt. Rhoads added that some messages have been garbled on the receiving end, due to numerous repetitions.

The local Search and Rescue queried Sgt. Rhoads on the proper procedure to act as a volunteer group not affiliated with any law enforcement agency. Rhoads agreed to attend the Aug. 10 meeting with further information.

He did state that regardless of who is responding to a call for aid, the sheriff should be notified. It was revealed that there have been several incidents in the Valley of which he is unaware. His area covers 654 square miles from Yucca Valley to Old Woman Springs.

The Rescue group has been conducting rescue operations on its own, rather than sit out unavoidable delays. In regard to responsibility, a person is not subject to suit according to law, if he does not go beyond what a "reasonable and prudent" person would do.

The local Search and Rescue would like everyone making a trip off the main road to leave word with someone regarding the route and intended time of return, "to file a flight plan," so that in case of trouble, rescue operations can be effected with dispatch.

The tenor of the meeting was that the local group wishes to help those who are in trouble, but without danger of interfering with any official agency. Sgt. Rhoads promised to return with some answers.

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THE DESERT WHISPERS from JOHNSON VALLEY

Martha Coutant editor
Marie Stanley associate editor
Stanley Coutant managing editor

SHOUTS AND WHISPERS

Dean and Ruby Piner enjoyed a visit from their grandchildren, Billy and Sandra Long. The children spent a week here.

Mr. and Mrs. Merle Bruce were up for the weekend of the Fourth.

Harry Paden is recuperating in a rest home in Garden Grove. Best wishes from all, Harry.

Mrs. Eva May Brooks, mother of Duane, is visiting a granddaughter in London, Eng., with possibly a stopover to see another granddaughter in New York. She is accompanied by Mrs. Maxine Shea, of Great Falls Montana, her daughter and mother of the girls.

Clay Quarles is negotiating a 20-year lease with Great Western United Sugar Co., for his Green Rock Mine on Fry Mountain. Clay said he agreed to remain at the mine for six months, before he and Betty move on. He anticipates the green rock will be distributed nation-wide. Heretofore the work has been virtually a one-man operation.

Visiting Stanton and Frances Rosenberg are son Robert and his wife Donna. Bob is a sergeant in the air force, and is stationed at Beale Air Force Base near Marysville.

Leva LaFon is in the hospital in Loma Linda. Hurry back, Leva.

The Estes welcome mat is still getting a work out. Spending a few days are son Charles, his wife and four of their six children, Bonnie, Howard, Glenna and Carol. Chuck Jr. dropped in during his leave before shipping out with the Marines. Other recent guests include Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Fallon and their son Ralph, from Laramie, Wyoming.

Stan and Martha Coutant visited Bill and Betty Wark in Big Pine, where the Warks plan to retire in a few years. Big trees, green meadows and rushing water were a nice change from the desert, but both have their attractions.

Flying in to Valley Vista Airport for a visit with Dan and Eva Jarvis was Elmer Guillermo, an exchange student from Guatemala. With him were three friends from Los Angeles, Robert Mutch, Ron Hale and Clark Robbins.

Morey Randall says a big thank you to his many friends who sent messages and best wishes while he was in the hospital, and assisted in his move from the Valley. Morey and Tiny are settled in their new home in Arizona, but leave behind a host of friends who look forward to their visits in the Valley.

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EMERGENCY LANDING

A glider pilot christened Estes' new airstrip shortly after Clarence finished building it.

And Tom Finch, of Santa Monica, was mighty glad it was there. Finch was soaring in his Polish Foka 4 on a flight from El Mirage to 29 Palms, a round-trip of 180 miles. Winds were good until he hit Johnson Valley and was forced down, just making it to the new landing strip.

Local residents helped load the glider on the truck which was following the flight.

Finch is an experienced glider pilot and president of the Douglas Soaring Club.

We ran across his picture on page 59 of the August "Pace" in an article on soaring.

LATE BULLETINS FROM SOUTH JOHNSON VALLEY
by Mildred Jacobs

Word has just been received that Dan Hibbard is feeling so perky that he and Eva have continued their travels on to Pennsylvania, to visit Eva's relatives. They also stopped in Kentucky. Plans are to return about the middle of August.

Ernest Hawver has applied for a license to start a refuse collection route in Johnson Valley. The Hawvers will move to the Valley in about a month.

Ronnie Roush of Los Angeles, spent his three week vacation with his parents, Bea and Earl Roush, here in the Valley.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Jody DeVictoria drew the picture for us this month. Sorry that mimeographing does not allow for shading.

PHONES ARE NEEDED IN THE VALLEY

THE OLD HORNED TOAD GETS WORDY AGAIN

July 14 - was that a day to remember or a day to forget in Johnson Valley?

Those who had the courage to keep their citizens band radios on all day followed the reports with various reactions.

Dawn was heralded with the arrival of the motorcycle and motorbike riders, with plans to race on Soggy Dry Lake. Residents were made aware of the situation when a call went out via CB from the Quarles for the assistance of the sheriff. Bike riders were careening across private property. Clouds of black smoke from a fire billowed into the sky. Many calls were made regarding the need for a call to the fire department, before it was ascertained that the smoke was caused by burning tires signalling the start of the race. Local residents are not permitted open fires but must burn refuse in legal incinerators.

There were many calls for a missing unit, need for help for the injured, and for instructions between points on the race course. A rescue unit came on duty and an ambulance arrived.

Race officials eventually contacted the Quarles, apologized for trespassing, and agreed to pay for damage. The explanation was that the bike riders come from the city and cut loose when they find all this open space.

Hardly had the dust subsided from the homeward-bound vehicles when the sheriff was again summoned. It was reported that four boys in a VW had attempted to stop a family in a passing car at gunpoint. Johnson Valley residents were alerted to watch out for the vehicle, and the sheriff was called.

Was there a breakdown in communications?

The sheriff's deputies reportedly located the VW, questioned and released the boys, but the word did not get out, and Valley residents continued to patrol the area. Volunteer patrolman Jack Inns was cruising slowly, when his car was struck from the rear by another car. The other car rolled over and two women were injured. Another call for the sheriff, an ambulance and tow-truck, all relayed with time-consuming difficulties over CB, indicating an urgent need for telephones.

Much of the burden in message delivery falls on "iron operators" Jacobs, Quarles and Hawley.

Residents took to the air to ask why the boys were released. At the last report the victims had indicated an intention to sign a complaint against the boys.

And so about midnight, lights went off in Johnson Valley, leaving many to wonder how the problems should be handled with the least anxiety resulting.

The easy way would be to turn off the radios and leave everyone to fend for himself. But we doubt that that is the route Johnson Valley residents wish to take.

There is no phone in Johnson Valley. The nearest is a 12-mile drive one-way. Residents equipped with CB look out for each other. The phone company reports that the Public Utitlities Commission has not seen fit to grant a franchise. At least 84 persons have applied for phones.

There is no resident deputy in the Valley. Deputies are on duty where the problems are, it was reported. How bad do things have to be? There have been gun fatalities, traffic accidents, burglaries and heart attack victims in the Valley. July 14 was not an extraordinary Sunday. Sheriffs' vehicles are not equipped with CB because of the extraneous chatter. And many messages are garbled in several relays.

Much of the activity occurs on weekends and holidays. Maybe a weekend deputy would be less of a strain on the department than several fast trips.

A group of citizens has organized a search and rescue group. They try to assist the sheriff. But this has been called "interference" on occasion. While on the other hand, citizens have been berated for not going to the assistance of a person in distress, as in the Kitty Genovese case in New York.

What's a guy to do?

There are no schools, ambulance or fire protection within 25 miles; no resident deputy, water system or phones. Roads are not maintained except for the main highway.

But the mail still gets through with the tax bills.

This may sound discouraging to anyone contemplating building on his property, but this is the day of telling it like it is. It's still a wonderful place to live. That's why we're all here.

It's just that on days like July 14, a simple thing like a telephone could save a life.

- M. C.

If you think phones are needed in Johnson Valley, write the Public Utilities Commission, 107 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, Calif., 90012, and urge that the franchise be granted to General Telephone for phone service in Johnson Valley.

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR:
CLARENCE ESTES

Clarence Estes is a triple-throttle man, car, train or plane. He retired from the railroad three years ago, and has taken up flying.

Clarence's relaxed appearance is deceiving. He is an ex-pugilist, and at 68 years of age is still in good shape. In addition to the new flying venture, he's making his part of the desert green with trees, vegetables and flowering shrubs, and has begun bee-keeping.

Clarence was a professional boxer when he and Flossie met and were married.

During World War I, Clarence came close to the lightweight championship. He fought Leo Huggins in Koblenz, Germany. Leo knocked him down 12 times to win the bout and the chance to challenge the world champion, Benny Leonard. In the locker room later, Leo chided Clarence over a date with an army nurse that went to the winner. Clarence knocked Leo out but it didn't count.

Leonard beat Huggins and retained his title. Clarence went to railroading.

He started on the Union Pacific as a fireman when the fires were hand-stoked. The railroad awarded prizes each month to the fireman getting the best mileage with the coal. Clarence won a wardrobe of overalls and quite a reputation.

He stayed with the railroads through the years of hand-firing, automatic stokers, oil and Deisel. He retired as an engineer from Santa Fe.

One of his regular runs on the U.P. was between Laramie and Cheyenne, Wyoming, where the highest standard guage railroad reaches an elevation of 8,000 feet. After the automatic stokers were installed, Clarence kept in fighting shape by jumping off the train and running along beside it as it chugged slowly up the grade.

Clarence has operated all the famous passenger trains on the Santa Fe, the Chief, El Capitan, Daylight, Lark, all of them.

On one trip to San Diego, when Flossie was a passenger, the woman sitting beside her marvelled at the smoothness of the stops and starts. She said she'd like to meet the engineer.

Flossie obliged, proudly.

The woman told Clarence she had ridden trains all over the world for many years, but the trip to San Diego with Clarence was the smoothest ever.

Clarence saw many changes in railroading. Originally the hog-head ran his "own" locomotive and guarded it jealously. When the engine went to the yard for repairs, the hogger often took time off to oversee the work. Often he worked over his train whistle. Each engineer has his own recognizable way of whistling. A little touch-up could make the sound even more distinctive.

(CONTINUED)

Flossie always knew when Clarence was coming into town.

"But railroading went to hell when regulations were changed and it was first in-first out, with any old engine," Clarence says.

Clarence loved railroading, but he is just as enraptured with flying, which he considers the safest method of transportation. He expects to take the test for his pilot's license soon.

Flossie has always taken an interest in his work and projects, and she hasn't stopped at the latest. She too is studying the books and charts, and there is a whopping lot to study. She says she will go up at every opportunity.

Clarence built an airstrip on his property behind the house, and he plans to buy a plane. He made his first landing on his own strip on July 18, with his instructor, Rick Hannifin, in a Piper Cherokee 140.

The Estes have three married sons and several grandchildren. Clarence plans to take them all up.

Clarence is a Mason and Shriner, and Flossie is active in Eastern Star. She is also busy in her church, and often adds to the decor of any occasion with attractive decorations she creates.

Both Clarence and Flossie are very active in the Johnson Valley Improvement Association.

Flossie was in real estate for 18 years in Rialto. She still has an occasional thought of going back into it. But if she expects to continue to keep up with Clarence, she'll never have the time. Clarence still has a full head of steam and it looks as though nothing can put the fire out.

C. B. SEMINAR

The Desert Sands Citizens Band Inc., has planned a seminar for CBers and outdoorsmen on Aug. 31, Sept. 1 and 2.

The event is sponsored by a Search and Rescue Team in Galileo Hill Park in California City.

Instruction in search and rescue techniques, desert survival, new ideas, raffles and educational demonstrations are listed on the agenda.

Information is planned especially for those who travel, or plan to travel in the desert.

Facilities are limited to about 500 persons, according to the announcement.

Registration fee is $2 for adults and 50 cents for children under 12.

Reservations may be made with the Desert Sands Citizens Band, Inc., P.O. Box 63, California City, California, 93501.

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FROM JOHNSON VALLEY
Star Route 2, Box 804
Yucca Valley, Calif. 92284